



Proving the value of Sponsorship and Promotions

Absolute Radio is a strong believer in the power of sponsorship and promotions, but we wanted to prove that it was indeed superior to regular spot airtime. We weren't looking to diminish the importance of spot airtime – but wanted to prove that S&P can work even harder for you.

In 2009 we conducted some research into how people respond to sponsorship and promotional activity when compared with either hearing no commercial activity at all or solely hearing spot airtime.

Any research into advertising needs to address a similar set of problems, removing any exterior influences that may affect respondents' feelings. To minimise this, we used a real product – but one that was not available for consumers to purchase in the UK. In choosing Starbucks Via, an instant coffee for home consumption, we were choosing a product with broad appeal, yet one without many preconceptions. At the same time, we weren't in a position of having to create a completely imaginary brand.

We wanted to consider the attitude of listeners towards sponsorship and promotions, and the impact that has on brand awareness.

We considered four levels of commercial activity, hoping to prove that each was more effective than the previous.



- Demonstrate added value of sponsorship and promotions
- Prove that sponsorship and promotions can be more effective than airtime, **without** detracting from spot airtime
- Consider the attitude of listeners towards sponsorship and promotions, and the impact that has on brand attributes

No commercial activity was followed by spot airtime alone – regular 30 second commercials. This in turn was compared with promotional trails – trails run in an editorial style with station voices pre-promoting future sponsored programming (e.g. "Listen to the Christian O'Connell Breakfast Show tomorrow morning to win a holiday

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to South America with..."). Finally there were Live Reads. These are the on-air DJs voicing the same sort of information, but live in their own shows.

There is one additional commonly used type of audio; the live execution. Typically this will be a competition mechanic where a listener is brought to air and competes to win a prize. However the nature of promotional executions is that although this is the culmination of promotion and undoubtedly has very powerful cut-through with listeners; there are usually only a very limited number of executions of this type in comparison to a significantly larger number of the other types of execution. The majority of a campaign's delivery comes from those previous types of audio, so it was felt fairer not to compare this type of execution.

There are, however, a large number of variables in determining what is and isn't a successful campaign. The framework of this research didn't allow us to factor in all these, but they include:

- *Creativity*
- *Presenter used*
- *Live promotional executions*
- *Prizes offered*
- *Promotional mechanic*
- *Exclusivity*
- *Scarce inventory*
- *Solus execution*

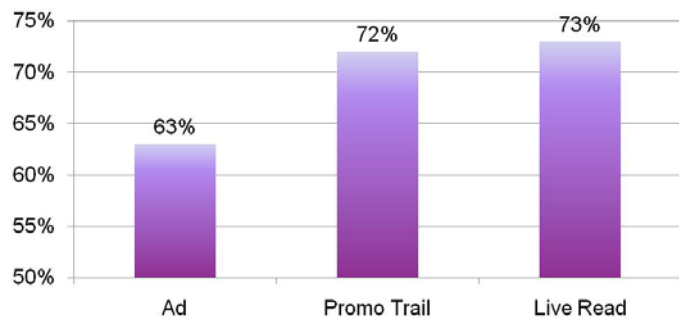
Each one of these could mean that S&P could deliver even more impact. But that does mean that this research does not deliver a precise relative benefit. In other words, it does not provide a multiplier.

Four identical pieces of audio were prepared: one with no message and just a station "sweeper"; one with a single commercial; one with a pre-recorded trail featuring a station voice; and one with a live read from a DJ.

250 respondents listened to each piece of audio, meaning that 1000 interviews were conducted in total. The research was carried out online by EMR.

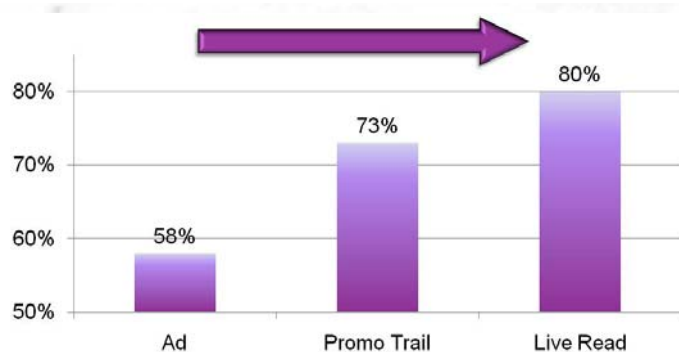
Brand Recall

Brand recall was substantially higher for promotional trails than for spot airtime alone.



Spontaneous Brand Recall

There's a notable upwards movement again from a plain advertisement through to a DJ's live read.

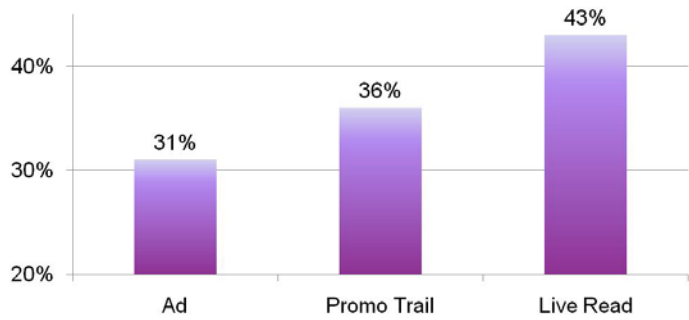


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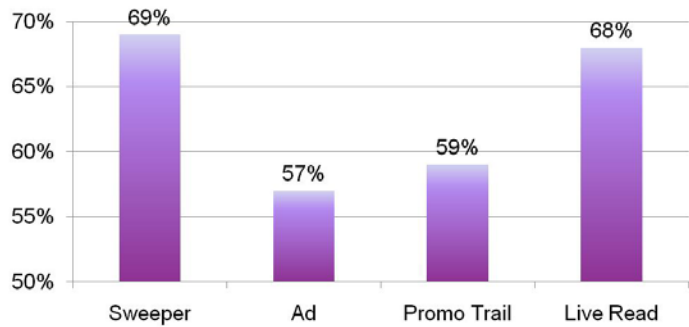
Positive Brand Impact

Once again, there's a clear upwards shift from airtime to live reads.



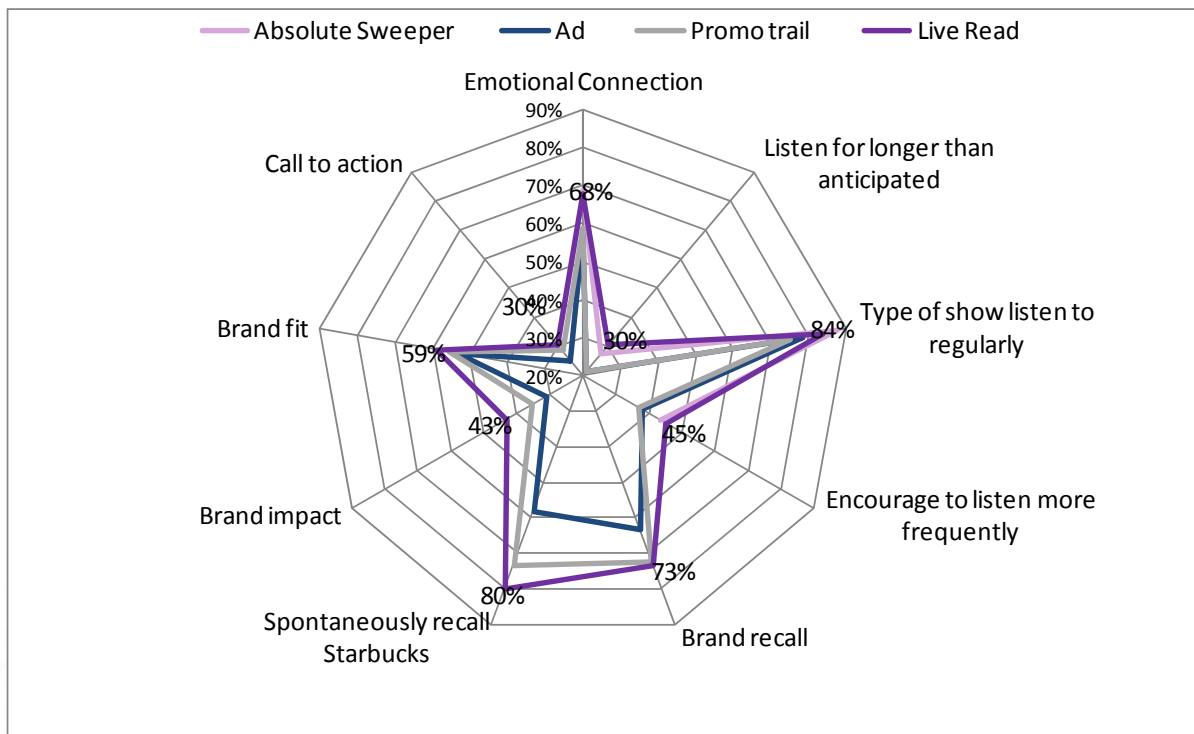
Emotional Connection

This measure considers how much someone rates the audio they've just heard. What these results show is that live reads are almost as popular amongst listeners as straightforward music output. The brand is therefore benefiting with the



The research also shows that heavier listeners show the most emotional connection.

Summary



- Amplify demonstrates the greater benefits of sponsorship and promotions compared with straightforward airtime.
- Strong levels of awareness and recall can be achieved.
- Sponsorship and promotions can achieve a very high emotional connection with listeners.
- Finally – this research is not a multiplier!

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